

**A Watershed Conditions Report
For the State of Kansas
HUC 11030013
(Middle Arkansas Slate) Watershed**



Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Bureau of Water
Watershed Management Section
1000 SW Jackson
Topeka, KS 66612



Watershed Conditions Report For HUC 8 11030013 (Middle Arkansas-Slate)

Prepared by
Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)
Nonpoint Source Section
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Watershed Conditions Report is designed to serve as a water quality “atlas”, and is intended to provide stakeholders in water quality with a tool to assess the condition of water resources within their watershed. Surface water quality for HUC 8 11030013 streams and rivers is generally fair with less than half of the surface water bodies not supporting their designated uses. The primary pollutant concern within HUC 8 11030013 streams and rivers is fecal coliform bacteria (FCB). Fecal coliform bacteria is found in the digestive systems of warm blooded animals. In the environmental coliform bacteria is an indicator of potential disease producing organisms. Additional pollutant concerns within the watershed include chlordane, chloride, sulfate and excess nutrients. Excess nutrients such as phosphorous or nitrogen can cause an abundance of plants and algae, which use up oxygen in the water, suffocating fish and aquatic organisms. Chlordane is an insecticide used primarily to treat termite infestations and is no longer authorized for use. Chloride is a naturally occurring mineral and in high concentrations it can cause deterioration of domestic plumbing, water heaters, and municipal water works. Sulfate is a naturally occurring mineral that can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water.

There are several small city and county lakes within HUC 8 11030013. The primary pollutant concern for lakes within the watershed is eutrophication. Eutrophication is a natural process which creates conditions favorable for algae blooms and excess plant growth. This process is often accelerated by excess nutrient loading from the watershed. Additional pollutant concerns for lakes within the watershed include pH, chloride, sulfate and silt. pH determines the alkalinity or acidity of water in the lake. If the water is too basic or too acidic it can potentially stress or kill the aquatic life and vegetation. Silt loading is a result of erosion as the bare soil enters the lake and settles to the bottom. Silt increases the cloudiness of the Lake, creates a displeasing color, and fills the lake bottom. Chloride is a naturally occurring mineral and in high concentrations it can cause deterioration of domestic plumbing, water heaters, and municipal water works. Sulfate is a naturally occurring mineral that can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water.

Groundwater resources in HUC 8 11030013 include the Alluvial aquifers of the Arkansas River and it's tributaries and the High Plains aquifer. Water from these aquifers is generally in good condition with naturally occurring minerals and nitrate as the primary pollutant concerns.

PURPOSE

The Watershed Conditions Report is designed to serve as a water quality “atlas” for a given watershed, and is intended to provide Watershed Stakeholders Committees (WSC) with a tool to assess the condition of water resources within their watershed.

BACKGROUND

The Clean Water Act mandates that States assess the quality of their waters and implement Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for water bodies that do not meet their designated uses. The following is a summary of steps taken by the State of Kansas to comply with these requirements of the Clean Water Act.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) prepared the Kansas Unified Watershed Assessment in 1998. This assessment classifies the State’s watersheds into four categories. A Category I classification means the watershed is in need of restoration due to having water quality impairments or degradation of other natural resources related to an aquatic habitat, ecosystem health and other factors related to aquatic life resources. Category II watersheds are in need of protection. Category III are watersheds with pristine or sensitive aquatic system conditions on lands administered by federal, state, or tribal governments. Category IV watersheds are those for which there is insufficient data to make accurate classification. KDHE has assigned a restoration priority score to each Category I watershed.

As mandated by section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, lakes and streams within the Category I watersheds, which do not meet water quality standards, are published biannually in the 303(d) list. Subsequently, lakes and streams which appear on the 303 (d) list are scheduled to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) prepared. KDHE is currently preparing TMDLs for impaired stream segments located within the highest restoration priority watersheds.

To restore water quality within the Category I watersheds, KDHE recommends the implementation of a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS). The ultimate goal of the WRAPS process is to create and implement a plan to restore the health of water bodies that do not meet their water quality standards. Additionally, the WRAPS process will insure that water bodies that currently meet their water quality standards are protected.

KDHE recommends that the WRAPS process be implemented on a local level by a Watershed Stakeholders Committee (WSC). The WSC would have the responsibility of working with local and state agencies to develop a WRAPS plan. This plan should identify the following: public outreach methods; required monitoring activities based on water quality goals and outcomes; specific water quality problems; watershed coordinator/evaluator; actions to be taken to achieve water quality goals and outcomes; schedule for implementation of needed restoration measures; and funding needs.

Streams and Rivers

HUC 8 11030013

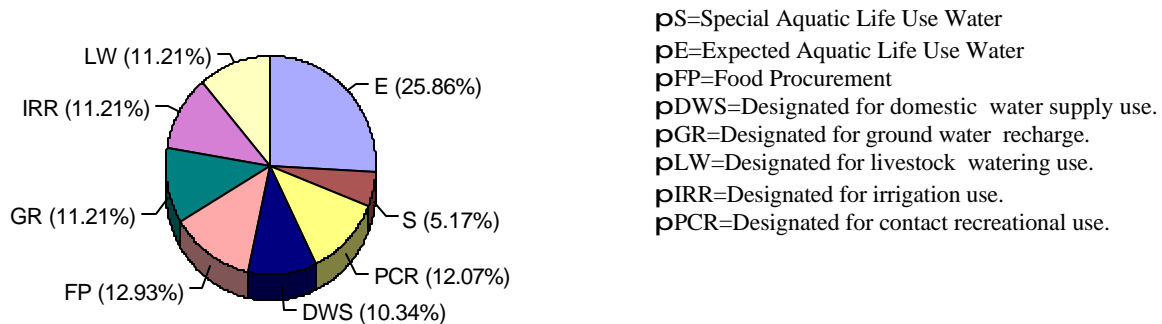
The Huc 8 11030013 watershed is ranked sixth in priority for watershed restoration throughout the state. According to the Unified Watershed Assessment, 43.4% of the total miles of water in this watershed do not meet their designated uses. The Arkansas River, Chisholm Creek, Spring Creek, and Cowskin Creek are among the larger streams and rivers. See Attachment 1 for a map of streams and rivers in HUC 8 11030013.

Designated Uses

This watershed is mostly a drainage basin for the Arkansas River, however, several smaller streams, creeks, and rivers are also present throughout the area. There are 83 public water supplies within the watershed, many of which draw water from the Arkansas River and its alluvium. According to the Kansas Surface Water Register, the most common designated use for streams and rivers in this watershed include: aquatic life uses, food procurement; recreation, and groundwater recharge.

Figure 1

Huc 11030013 Surface Water Uses



TMDL/Contaminate Concerns

Streams and rivers throughout Kansas have been sub-divided into segments. By dividing the streams and rivers into segments they can be better analyzed and understood. A reach of river or stream may have segments which vary greatly in water quality, based on surrounding land uses. The figures below display the impairments of the streams and rivers based on the number of segments sampled.

Surface waters not meeting their designated uses will require total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). Figure 2 shows 32% of the stream/river segments sampled need TMDLs. As shown below in figure 3, some of the primary pollutant concerns of this watershed's streams and rivers are fecal coliform bacteria (FCB), chlordan (chlordan), excess nutrients, chloride (Cl), and sulfate (SO₄). Approximately 27% of the stream and river segments are impaired by FCB, 23% by chlordan, 19% by nutrients, 15% by chloride, and 15% by sulfate (see Figure 3).

FCB serves as an indicator of potential disease causing organisms. Chlordane is an insecticide used primarily to treat termite infestations and is no longer authorized for use. Excess nutrients such as phosphorous or nitrogen causes an abundance of plants, which uses up oxygen in the water suffocating fish and aquatic organisms. Chloride is a naturally occurring mineral and in high concentrations it can cause deterioration of domestic plumbing, water heaters, and municipal water works. Sulfate is a naturally occurring mineral that can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water.

Figure 2

**Percentage of Stream/River Segments
Needing TMDLs**

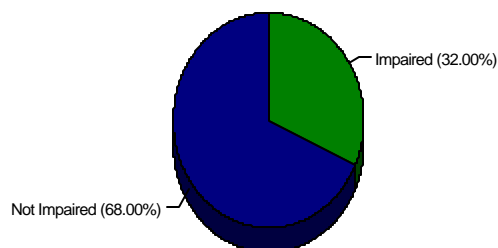
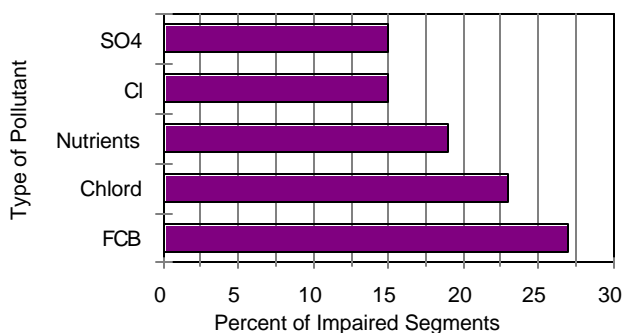


Figure 3

TMDL Distribution



Potential Pollution Sources

Potential sources of FCB contamination include feedlots, wastewater treatment facilities, septic systems, and wildlife. Potential sources of chlordane are row crop agriculture and domestic urban/suburban use. Potential sources of excess nutrients include row crop agriculture, registered and unregistered feedlots, urban/suburban runoff, wastewater treatment facilities, septic systems, and wildlife.

Analyzing the land uses within this watershed helps to understand which land uses might have greater influences on the source of the impairments. Below is a list of the land use in this watershed. Grassland is considered grazingland for livestock.

p Urban Area....11.5%	p Wooded area....1.9%
p Row Crop....12.3%	p Water area.... .7%
p Grassland....73.4%	p Other.... .01%

Feedlots: In Kansas, confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) with greater than 300 animal units must register with KDHE. There are approximately 92 registered CAFOs located within HUC8 11030013 (this number, which is based on best available information, may be dated and subject to change). Waste disposal practices and waste water effluent quality are closely monitored by KDHE for these registered CAFOs to determine the need for runoff control practices or structures. Because of this monitoring, registered CAFOs are not considered a significant threat to water resources within the watershed. A portion of the State's livestock population exists on small unregistered farms. These small unregistered livestock operations may contribute a significant source of fecal coliform bacteria and nutrients, depending on the presence and condition of waste management systems and proximity to water resources.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities: There are approximately 20 municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities within the watershed (this number may be dated and subject to change). These facilities are currently regulated by KDHE under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. These permits determine the maximum amount of pollutants allowed to be discharged to the “waters of the State”. Due to the chlorination processes involved in municipal waste treatment, these facilities are not considered to be a significant source of fecal coliform bacteria; however they may be a significant source of nutrients.

Septic Systems: There are currently thousands of septic systems within the watershed and this number is increasing. When properly designed, installed, and maintained, septic systems can act as an effective means of wastewater treatment. However, poorly maintained or “failing” septic systems can leach pollutants into nearby surface waters and groundwater. The exact number of failing septic systems within the watershed is unknown; however the number may be increasing due to the current trends in suburban development. Local Environmental Protection Programs and county health departments provide excellent sources of information regarding the proper design, installation, and maintenance for septic systems.

Wildlife: Wildlife located throughout the watershed are not usually considered a significant source of nonpoint source pollutants. However, during seasonal migrations, concentrations of waterfowl can add significant amounts of fecal coliform bacteria and nutrients into surface water resources.

Row Crop Agriculture: As stated above, approximately 12% of the watershed’s land is used for row crop agriculture. Row crop agriculture can be a significant source of nonpoint source pollution. Common pollutants from row crop agriculture include sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and fecal coliform bacteria. Many producers within the watershed regularly implement and maintain BMPs to limit the amount of nonpoint source pollutants leaving their farm. Some common BMPs include: the use of contour plowing; use of cover crops; maintaining buffer strips along field edges; and proper timing of fertilizer application.

Urban/Suburban Runoff: Many urban landscapes are covered by paved surfaces including roads, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks. These surfaces are impermeable and tend to divert water into storm drains at high velocities. This increased flow velocity from urban areas can cause severe stream bank erosion in receiving water bodies. Additionally, urban and suburban runoff may carry other pollutants like petroleum hydrocarbons and heavy metals. Currently, the watershed is about 11.5% urban. Limiting paved surfaces is the key to slowing urban nonpoint source pollution. The use of grass swales, open spaces, and storm water retention ponds are recommended to slow runoff in urban areas.

The watershed has an increasing population living in suburban areas. Residential landscapes are often designed with large turf areas which require high amounts of water and chemicals to maintain. The use of excessive amounts of fertilizers and lawn care chemicals in residential areas can contribute a significant amount of pollution to nearby water resources. Suburban nonpoint source pollution can be limited by: using less lawn fertilizers and chemicals; control of construction sites; proper disposal of pet waste; establishing large areas of native vegetation; and conserving the amount of water use for plant maintenance.

Lakes & Wetlands

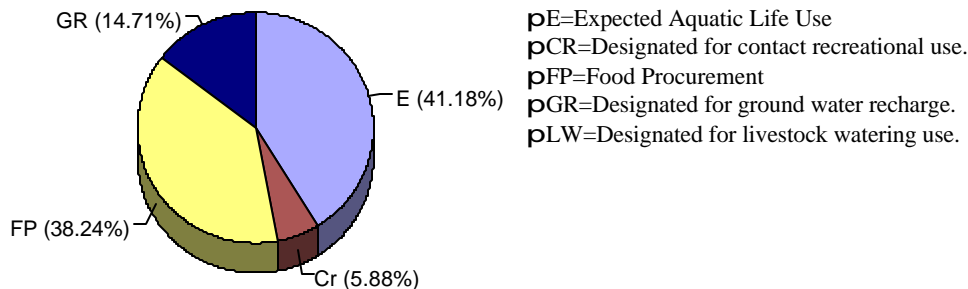
Huc 8 11030013 is the home to several smaller city and county lakes, as well as two wetland areas. Many of the lakes are used for recreational purposes such as camping and fishing but for the most part they are used for food procurement. The wetland areas, otherwise known as the Pracht Wetland and the Slate Creek Wetland, occupy many aquatic species and filter runoff. Some of the smaller lakes in the watershed include Moss Lake, Watson Park Lake, Emery Park Lake, and Horseshoe Lake. See Attachment 2 for a map of lakes in HUC 8 11030013.

Designated Uses

According to the Surface Water Register, the majority of the lakes and wetlands in this watershed are designated for expected aquatic life use, food procurement, ground water recharge, and recreational purposes.

Figure 4

Huc 11030013 Lake Uses



TMDL/Contaminate Concerns

Surface waters not meeting their designated uses will require total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). Approximately 36% of this watershed's lakes/wetlands sampled need TMDLs (see Figure 4). Primary pollutants for this watershed's lakes and wetlands are eutrophication (E), chloride (Cl), pH, sulfate (SO₄), and silt. As shown below in Figure 5, approximately 56% of the lakes/wetlands in this watershed are eutrophic, and 11% are impaired by pH, chloride, sulfate, and excess silt.

Eutrophication is caused by excess nutrients from a variety of nitrogen and phosphorous sources including row crop agriculture, feedlots, septic systems, and urban/suburban runoff. pH determines the alkalinity or acidity of water in the lake. If the water is too basic or too acidic it can potentially stress or kill the aquatic life and vegetation. Silt loading is a result of erosion as the bare soil enters the lake and settles to the bottom. Silt increases the cloudiness of the lake, creates a displeasing color, and fills the lake bottom. Chloride is a naturally occurring mineral and in high concentrations it can cause deterioration of domestic plumbing, water heaters, and municipal water works. Sulfate is a naturally occurring mineral that can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water.

Figure 5

Percentage of Lakes/Wetlands Needing TMDLs

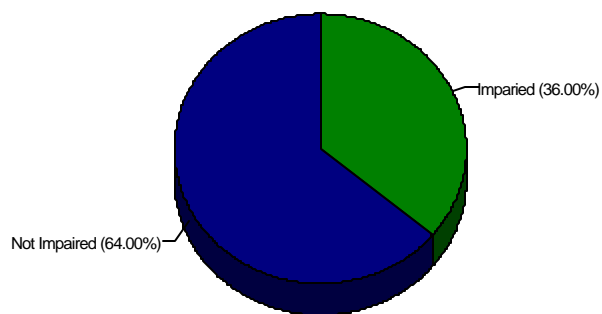
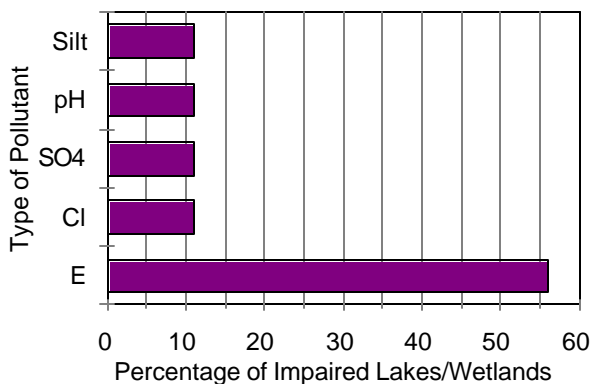


Figure 6

TMDL Distribution



Potential Pollution Sources

Based on the watershed's land use percentages, the primary pollutant sources for excess nutrients causing the eutrophication would be waste from grazingland and urban runoff. Additionally, municipal waste water treatment plants, septic systems, and row crop agriculture may contribute significant amounts of nutrients into the watershed.

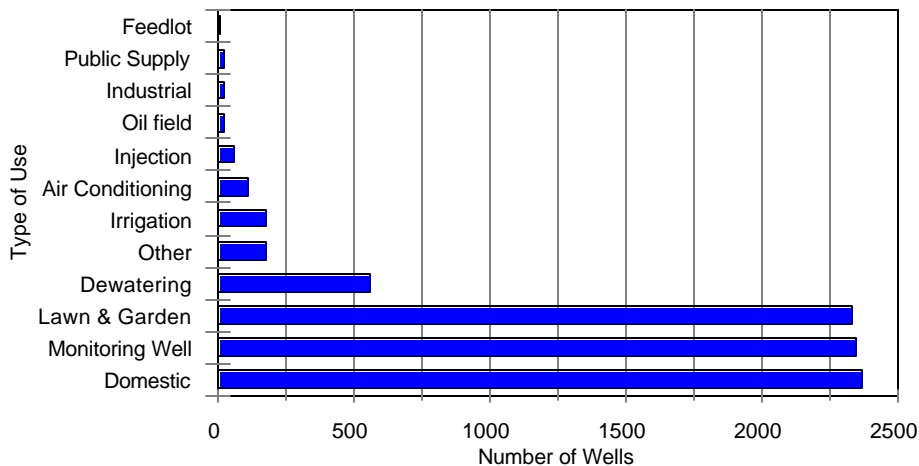
Groundwater

Major groundwater aquifers underlying this watershed include portions of the High Plains and alluvial aquifers of the Arkansas River and its tributaries. See attachment 4 for a map of the groundwater aquifers within this watershed.

Designated Uses

There are approximately 8,191 groundwater wells located within the watershed. Water from these wells is used for domestic use, monitoring, and lawn and garden.

Groundwater Uses



Aquifer Characteristics

- Alluvial Aquifer:** Alluvial aquifers of the Arkansas River and its tributaries exist throughout the watershed. Alluvial aquifers provide the primary water source for many public water supplies located within the watershed. Water quality in alluvial aquifers is generally good; however nitrates, minerals, pesticides, and bacteria can be pollutant concerns.
- High Plains Aquifer:** Portions of the High Plains aquifer exist in the northern portion of the watershed. Water from this aquifer is often used for irrigation. This water is typically hard to very hard but in good condition with no dominating pollutants.

Potential Pollution Types and Sources

Common groundwater pollutants include: nitrates, chloride, sulfates, bacteria and atrazine. Nitrate impaired groundwater is perhaps the most prevalent groundwater contamination problem in the State.

Nitrate: Nitrate is a naturally occurring compound and is an essential component of all living matter. However, high concentrations of nitrate in drinking water can cause adverse health effects including “blue baby” syndrome. Sources of nitrate include municipal waste water treatment plant discharges, runoff from livestock operations, leaching of fertilizer from urban and agricultural areas, and failing septic systems.

Chloride: Chloride is a naturally occurring mineral found in Kansas lakes, streams, and groundwater. In high concentrations, chloride can cause deterioration of domestic plumbing, water heaters, and municipal water works. The primary source of chloride impacted groundwater is intrusion of salt water from deeper formations, due to improperly constructed water wells which allow confined aquifers to come into contact with each other.

Sulfates: Sulfate is a naturally occurring mineral that can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water. Sulfates are dissolved into groundwater as the water moves through various sulfur containing rock formations.

Bacteria: Fecal coliform bacteria are found in the digestive systems of warm blooded animals. In the environment coliform bacteria is an indicator of potential disease causing organisms. Potential sources of bacteria contamination in groundwater include livestock facilities, septic systems, pets, and wildlife. Many wells are impacted by bacteria due to improper construction which allows water from the surface to funnel directly into the well.

Ammonia: Ammonia is a chemical which is toxic to fish and aquatic organisms. Sources of ammonia are livestock, septic tanks, fertilizer, municipal and industrial waste.

TSS: TSS stands for Total Suspended Solids which are particles such as soil, algae, and finely divided plant material suspended in water. Sources of TSS are soil erosion from cropland, stream banks, or construction sites, and municipal and industrial waste.

VOCs: Volatile Organic Compounds, also called purgeable organics, are components of fuels and solvents. They are ingredients in many household and industrial products. Sources of VOCs are leaking fuel storage tanks, trash dumps, and some agricultural pesticides.

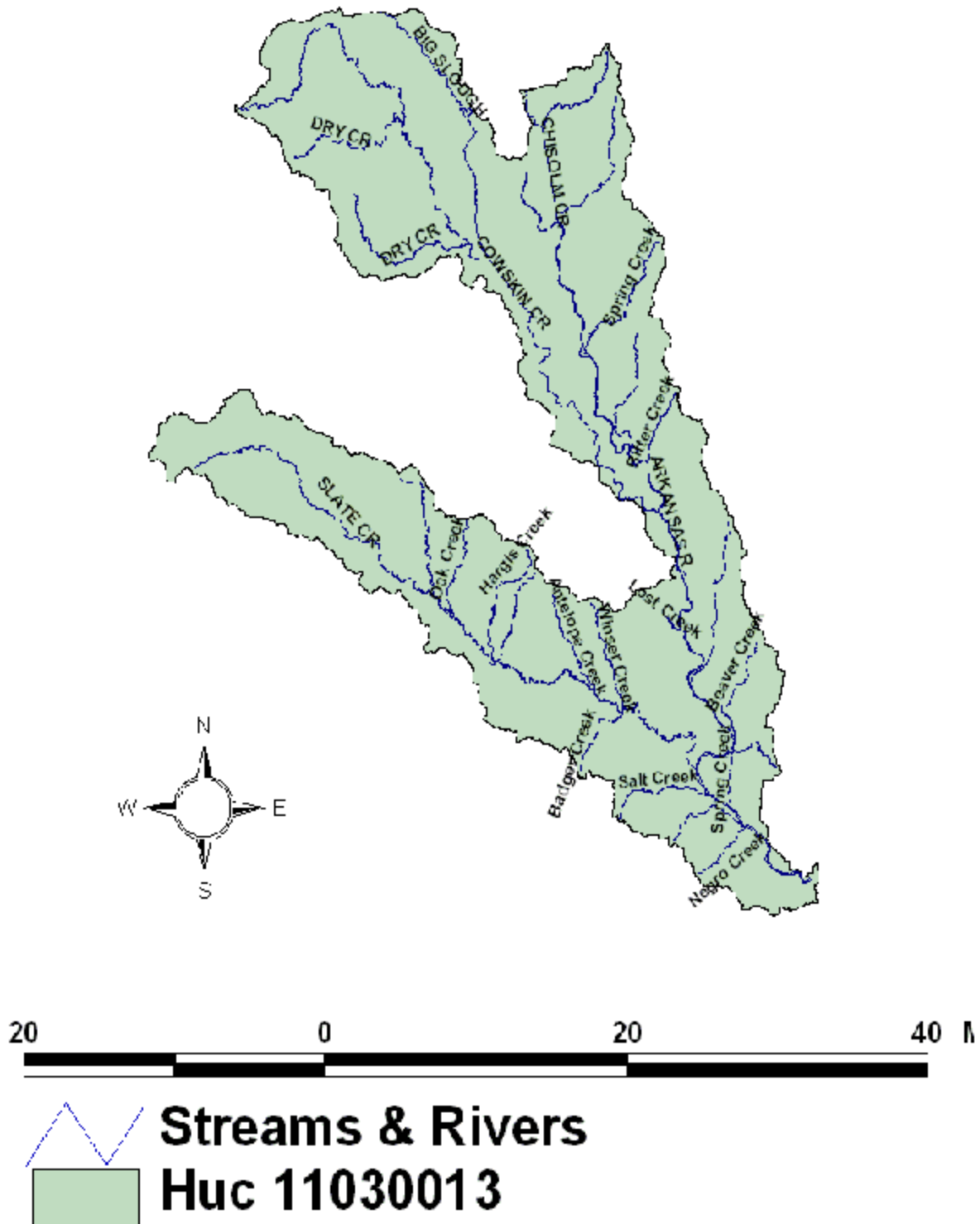
Iron: Iron is a naturally occurring element found in the soil throughout Kansas. It is an annoyance as it has an objectionable taste, causes a red stain to porcelain fixtures and laundry, and causes plumbing irritations.

Manganese: Manganese is a naturally occurring element and causes an unpleasant taste in drinking water, stains porcelain and laundry, and collects deposits in plumbing. It is naturally occurring throughout the soils in the state.

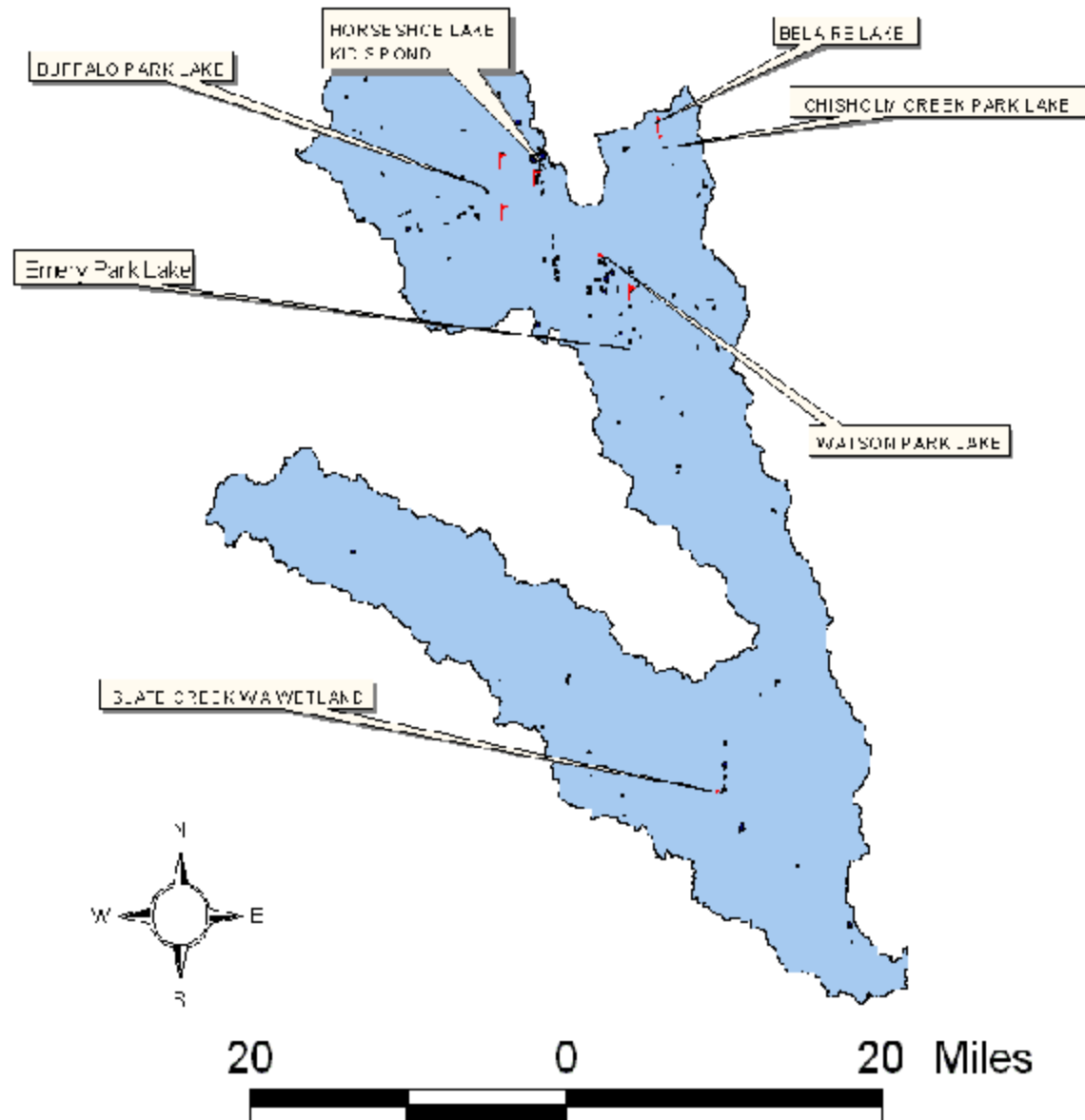
Attachment 1

Maps

Huc -11030013- Middle Arkansas Slate Streams & Rivers

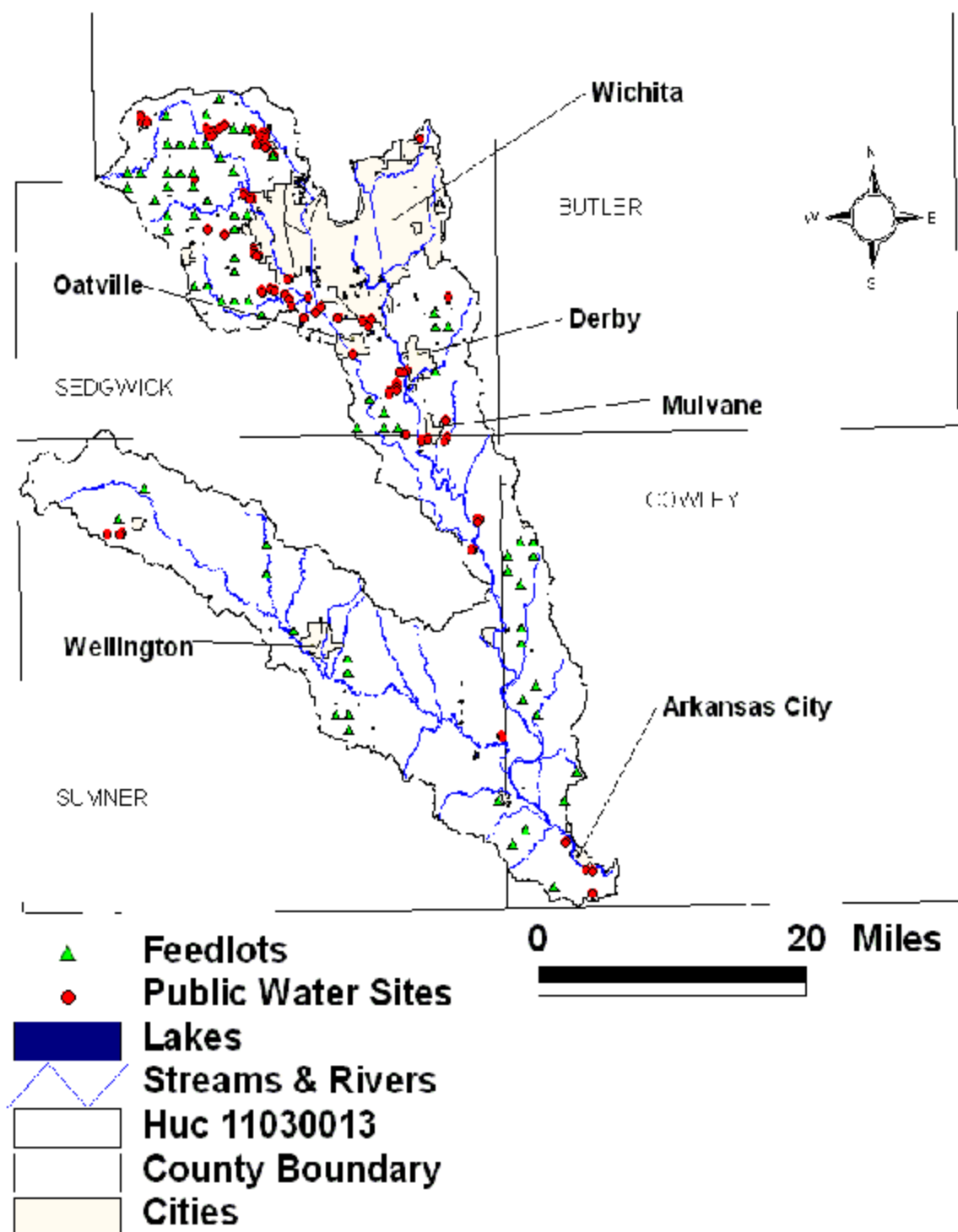


Huc -11030013- Middle Arkansas Slate Lake Monitoring Sites

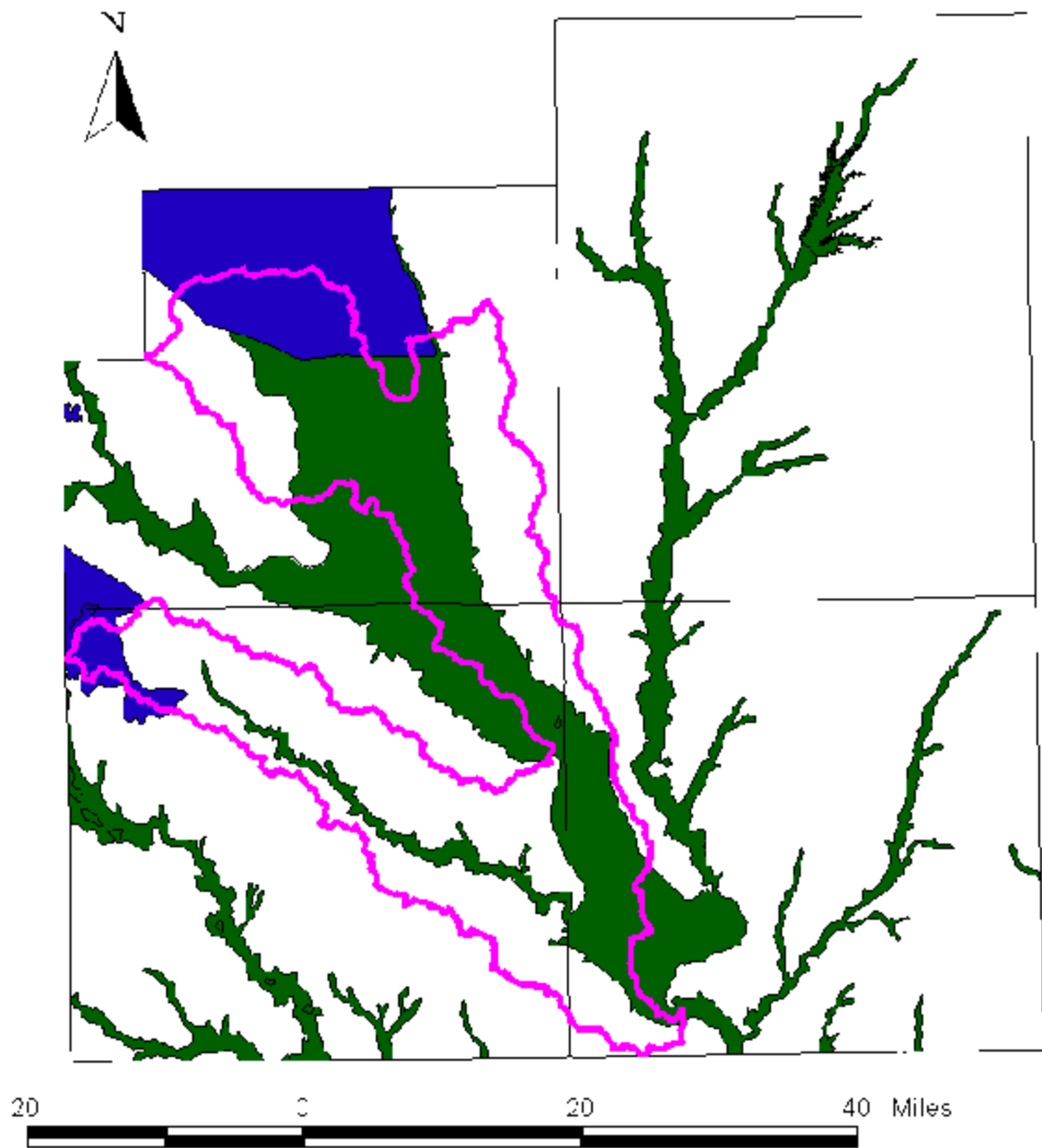


- Lake Monitoring Sites
- Lakes
- Huc 11030013

Huc -11030013- Middle Arkansas Slate Watershed Boundary



Huc 8 11030013 Middle Arkansas Slate Groundwater Aquifers



- Watershed Boundary
- County Boundary
- High Plains Aquifer
- Alluvial Aquifer

KDHE
Bureau of Water
19 November 2001
Jaime Ziesenis